

SPORTS  
sports

Fighters in action during a bout

TDT | Manama

**H**H Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa has said that the continued sponsorship for MMA comes as part of our efforts to develop this game in an effort to form national teams who are able to compete for top honours.

This came as the First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and Bahrain Olympic Committee

President was speaking as he attended the Bahrain Open MMA Championship that took place at the Bahrain Table Tennis Association's GYM in Isa Town.

Under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the event was organised by BMMAF with the supervision of Bahrain Combat Sports Council (BCSC).

The event witnessed the attendance of HH Shaikh Salman bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Pres-



HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa looks on during the event

ident of BCSC and Aymen bin Tawfiq Al Moayed, Minister of Youth and Sports as well as many other high ranking officials.

HH Shaikh Khalid noted Bahrain's recent accomplishments in this sport in 2019, including

winning the Asian Championship titles before finishing second in the European Championship and the World Championship, thanks to which Bahrain has topped the general standing of



Fighters during a bout

the IMMAF-WMMMAA. "Such results are historical, but obviously we want to achieve more," he added.

33 fighters have participated in the event representing 10 countries, including Bahrain, Saudi, USA, Spain, Kuwait,

Oman, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco. HH Shaikh Khalid also met Bahraini fighter Hus-sain Ayyad on the sidelines of the event to check on his recovery following a severe injury he sustained during BRAVE 29.



Bahrain's men's national basketball team's officials and players as they left yesterday for Beirut where they will face off with hosts Lebanon tomorrow in their second game of their 2021 Fiba Asia Cup qualifying campaign. The Bahrainis won their opening contest in dramatic fashion on Friday—a 68-67 thriller over India, with a last-second game-winner by guard Hesham Sarhan. Bahrain are in Group D of Asian Cup qualification. Upon their arrival yesterday, the Bahrainis went right to practising for tomorrow's clash, which is scheduled for a 10pm tip-off, Bahrain time. They will continue their preparations today. Left, Officials of Bahrain's national team with head coach Sam Vincent (fourth from right). Right, National team players, Muzamel Ameer (L), Mohammed Ameer (C) and Mohammed Qurban

## Giroud, Alonso back in favour as Chelsea sink Spurs

AFP | London

**O**livier Giroud and Marcos Alonso came in from the cold to inspire Chelsea's 2-1 win against Tottenham as the Blues cemented their grip on fourth place in the Premier League yesterday.

Giroud and Alonso had been reduced to fringe figures in Frank Lampard's first season as Chelsea manager.

But Lampard restored both veterans to the team at Stamford Bridge in a gamble that paid rich dividends.

With Tammy Abraham only fit enough to make the bench, Giroud started for the first time since November and the France striker's fine finish opened the scoring in the first half.

The 33-year-old could have joined Tottenham had Chelsea signed a forward in January, but instead he netted his first club goal since August and his first in the Premier League since April. Alonso, 29, maintained the theme of exiles getting back in favour as the left-back struck in the second half of his first league start since Chelsea's win at Tottenham in December.



Chelsea's French striker Olivier Giroud (L) scores his team's first goal

Antonio Rudiger's own goal came too late to ruin Chelsea's first win in five league games, moving them four points clear of fifth placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Ending Tottenham's three-game winning streak in the league was the perfect response to Monday's home defeat against Manchester United.

It was no more than they deserved after a vibrant performance that finally answered Lampard's call for a killer instinct in the final third.

Tottenham have now won just once in their last 34 visits to Stamford Bridge, making it a painful return for their former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, who was beaten by Lampard for the second time this term.

Mourinho had ramped up the mind games on Friday when he claimed to know Lampard was planning to use the same five-man defence that helped the Blues win at Tottenham earlier this season.

Mourinho was spot on, with Lampard making four changes in a return to the system he predicted, but he could not come up with an effective solution.

## Lewandowski double edges Bayern past bottom side

AFP | Berlin



Robert Lewandowski shoots the ball

AFP | Berlin

**B**undesliga leaders Bayern Munich squeezed past bottom side Paderborn 3-2 on Friday as Robert Lewandowski netted twice to spare goalkeeper Manuel Neuer's blushes in their final game before facing Chelsea in the Champions League.

Lewandowski now has a league-leading tally of 25 goals in the top flight, illustrating his importance to the team ahead of Tuesday's last 16, first-leg tie

in London.

Bayern twice surrendered the lead in Munich before securing the win which leaves them four points clear.

With Bayern leading 1-0 thanks to Serge Gnabry's early goal, Neuer mistimed a clearance outside his area, allowing Paderborn midfielder Dennis Srbeny to fire into an empty net just before half-time.

"I was worried about knocking into him, because that would have been a red card," Neuer explained.